

REMARKS

In the Office Action of January 27, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 12-16 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Bowen (U.S. Patent No. 5,485,866); and claims 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Bowen in view of either one of Blue, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,998,571), Lagache (U.S. Patent No. 5,398,735) or McGillis (U.S. Patent No. 3,963,041). The Examiner objected to claims 17, 21-22 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, and stated these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In this Amendment, applicants have rewritten claim 12 and added new claim 23 so as to include the subject matter of allowable claims 17 and 21, respectively. Applicants have also made corresponding amendments to maintain proper dependency of other claims, and have added dependent claims following claim 23 to specifically claim various aspects of the present invention. Thus, claims 12, 13, 15, 16, and 18-30 are currently pending. Claims 12 and 23 are independent claims. Applicants submit that these amendments address all rejections and objections made by the Examiner.

Finally, Applicants have enclosed an Information Disclosure Statement for Examiner's consideration.

In view of the above, Applicants request reconsideration and reexamination of the present application and timely allowance of all pending claims.

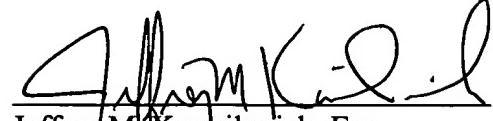
The Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at his convenience to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

DORITY & MANNING, P.A.

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Date


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